

AMERICAN SHAD

(06/03 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status — *Concern* - DMF currently conducting fishery dependent and independent work .

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1993-2002 —209,718 lb, \$157,823

2002 Commercial Landings and Value —274,655 lb, \$174,141

Average Recreational Landings 1993-2002 and 2002 —Unknown

Status of Fisheries Management Plan — The ASMFC Fishery Management Plan for American Shad and River Herring was approved in 1985. Amendment #1 of this plan was approved October 1998. DMF currently collects some fishery dependent and independent data to comply with the ASMFC FMP. The Atlantic Ocean intercept fishery for American shad will close January 1, 2005 as mandated by the ASMFC FMP.

Research and Data Needs —All types of fishery dependent and independent data

Current Minimum Size Limit —None

Harvest Season —MFC adopted a rule in 1995 establishing a commercial harvest season January 1-April 14; unlawful to take American shad and hickory shad by any method except hook-and-line from April 15-December 31, bag limits for American (and hickory) shad of 10 fish aggregate (American and hickory combined) per person per day.

Size and Age at Maturity —Males- 12-17.5 inches, Females- 15-19 inches, Males- 3-5 years old, Females- 4-6 years old

Historical and Current Maximum Age —10 years old, 9 years old

Juvenile Abundance Indices (Albemarle Sound Area) Average 1972-2002 —(unvalidated) 0.26, **2002**-0.45

Habits/Habitats —American shad are an anadromous (spending majority of life in the ocean, returning to fresh water to spawn) species. Spawning occurs from March - mid-June, primarily in the main stream portions of rivers where there is sufficient current to suspend and move the eggs. Juveniles spend their first growing season in their natal river and sound systems until the water temperatures decrease, triggering emigration to the ocean. American shad will remain in the ocean until reaching sexual maturity, then return to fresh water to spawn.

For more information, see [DMF Species Leads page](#)